	Related Procedure:	Safe Environments for Children and Vulnerable People Policy		
	Document Controller:	Manager, Organisational Development		
	Current Date:	27/06/2023	Next Review Date:	27/06/2027

Code of Conduct - Child Safe

Council is committed to ensuring that children and young people are treated with sensitivity, respect, fairness and dignity within a welcoming and supportive environment that is free from all types of harm and inappropriate behaviour.

This Code of Conduct has been drafted in accordance with section 114 of the South Australian *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017* and Council's *Safe Environments for Children and Vulnerable People Policy*.

All employees, volunteers, contractors, consultants and any other persons engaged to provide any service wholly or partly to children on behalf of Council are required to comply with this Code of Conduct.

The standards in this Code of Conduct are consistent with those established by the Department of Human Services and international human rights principles as enshrined within the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

This Code of Conduct does not cover every situation – however, the values, ethics and standards it sets are a reference point to help make decisions relating to situations not referred to in this Code of Conduct. It sets out the minimum standards of behaviour expected during any interactions with children and young people in accessing Council services.

Council's Manager Organisational Development can be contacted for further information relating to the application of this Code of Conduct or the Safe Environments for Children and Vulnerable People Policy.

Supportive Behaviours


Staff, contractors, consultants, volunteers, elected members and those who access Council services must at all times:

- Treat children and young people with dignity, respect, sensitivity, fairness and equity
- Ensure children and young people are protected from any form of harm or discrimination
- Ensure the environment is safe for children and young people – this includes protection from violence, bullying, teasing, threatening and sexist or racist remarks.

Role model positive behaviours, for example:

- encourage children and young people to participate in decision making processes;
- give constructive feedback to children and young people; and
- ensure children and young people are aware of their rights, including their rights to respect, fairness and safety.

Staff, contractors, consultants, volunteers and elected members with mandatory notification responsibilities must be aware of their duty to report to the Child Abuse Report Line (13 14 78) if they form a suspicion that a child or young person is being harmed or is at risk of harm; or

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discuss their concern with their supervisor or manager; and where relevant, explain the commitment to maintaining confidentiality, including situations that would require the sharing of information, for example mandatory notification responsibilities.

Safe and protective work practices


Staff and volunteers must adopt safe and protective work practices.

Staff and volunteers must be aware of potential situations and actions when working with children or young people that may be misinterpreted or misconstrued and adopt safe work practices. For example:

- where possible work in an open and visible environment when with children and young people;
- dress appropriately – for staff and volunteers, in accordance with Council's Dress Code and Wardrobe Policy;
- secure parental/guardian consent for excursions or to obtain medical treatment for children and young people under 18 years if the need arises;
- adopt a calm and non-judgmental attitude to allow young people to feel safe to raise complaints or concerns; and
- where necessary, explain grievance procedures and avenues for complaint in simple and clear language that is appropriate to the age of the child or young person.

Unacceptable Behaviours include the following:

- Any form of discrimination against a child or young person based on ethnicity, culture, religion, gender, sexuality or on any other grounds.
- Hitting or physically assaulting a child or young person.
- Using language that is offensive, abusive or otherwise inappropriate.
- Showing preferential treatment to one child or young person over others.
- Shout, yell or speak to a child or young person in an angry, intimidating or threatening manner.
- Engaging in rough physical play with children or young people.
- Unnecessary physical contact with children or young people. For example, giving a child or young person a hug may be culturally inappropriate or it may be frightening or offensive to the child or young person.
- Condone or participate in illegal or unsafe behaviours when working with children or young people.
- Make inappropriate self-disclosures relating to any participation (past or present) in illegal or unsafe behaviours. For example, past drug use should not be disclosed to or discussed with children or young people.
- Initiating or engaging in 'friendship' relationships with a child or young person.

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- For example, it is not OK to make arrangements to socialise outside the work environment. Remember, children and young people are clients not friends.
- Taking children or young people to your home or on outings that do not fall within professional duties or that have not been authorised by parents or guardians
- Acting in a manner that is sexually inappropriate – this includes verbal, physical and implied behaviours.
- Initiating or developing a physical/sexual 'relationship' with a child or young person.
- Initiating or developing any relationship that could be deemed or perceived as exploitative or abusive with a child or young person.
- Failure to report disclosures, or suspicions, of harm (including harm or risk of harm) to the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) on 13 14 78 and to your relevant supervisor after you have made a mandatory notification.

Breaches of Policy / Disciplinary Action

All staff and volunteers, contractors, consultants and elected members have a responsibility for promoting and supporting these values and standards of behaviour.

Where a staff member, volunteer, contractor, consultant, or elected member is found to have acted outside of this Child Safe Code of Conduct, they will be subject to disciplinary action commensurate with the seriousness of their actions. For staff or volunteers, this disciplinary action may take the form of a warning, counselling or termination of their employment. For other categories, Council will take appropriate action relevant to that category.

Breaches of this Code of Conduct will be investigated on a case-by-case basis and in accordance with the Council's Staff Performance Management and any other relevant Policies/Procedures.

Reporting – if you have a concern

All staff, contractors, consultants, volunteers, elected members and those accessing Council services have a role in supporting this Code of Conduct by raising their concerns with the relevant Team Leader, Coordinator, Manager or General Manager. Any questions of compliance raised by Council Members, other staff or the community regarding this Code of Conduct will be considered by Manager Governance or the Chief Executive Officer.

If you have any difficulties or questions regarding this Child Safe Code of Conduct, you should discuss these with the Team Leader, Coordinator, Manager, Manager Organisational Development, Manager Community Services or General Manager.